

In Memoriam

CT
275
.F277
G522
1888

10.1.20

LIBRARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PRINCETON, N. J.

PRESENTED BY Herbert Adams Gibbons.

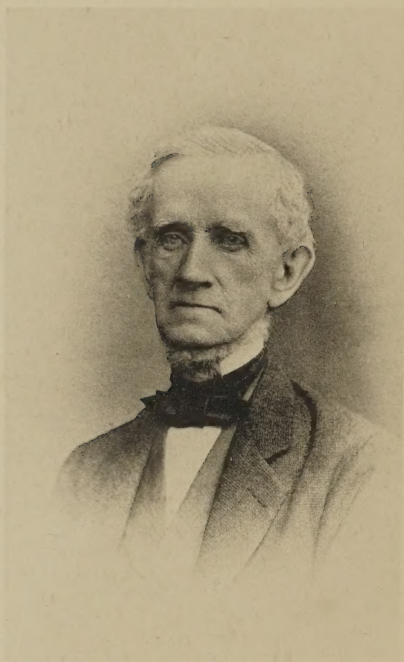
CT 275 .F277 G522 1888
Gibbons, Hughes Oliphant,
1843-1910.

In memoriam, John C. Farr

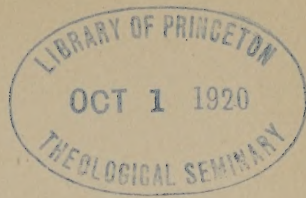
Rev Hughes C. Gibbons

With Compliments
of the
Children of John L. Farr—

Philad^a November 1888.



JOHN C. FARR.



IN MEMORIAM

John C. Farr

BORN NOVEMBER 13, 1799

DIED AUGUST 12, 1888

Address

BY HIS PASTOR

Rev. Hughes O. Gibbons

AT THE OBSEQUIES

1888

Philadelphia
Times Printing House
726 Chestnut St

In Memoriam.

On Sabbath, August 12, 1888, JOHN C. FARR entered into that rest that remaineth for the people of God. His death occurred in the country, near Haverford College, Pennsylvania, where, with his family, he was spending the summer. On the following Wednesday afternoon the body was removed to Old Pine Street Church, where services were held. He was then laid to rest, beside his kindred, in the grounds of this Church which he had so dearly loved and so faithfully served. Mr. FARR for many years kept a diary; he closed last year with these words, "We enter upon the New Year, D. V., to-morrow, with thankfulness for the mercies of the past and an humble and prayerful trusting in the Divine Providence, that our way may always be under His control, and that His will may be done."

"Each future scene to Thee I leave ;
Sufficient 'tis to know
Thou canst from every evil save
And every good bestow."

The following is the address delivered upon this occasion, by his pastor, Rev. Hughes O. Gibbons :

Address.

A FATHER in Israel has fallen. One whom we all loved and honored and trusted has been taken from our midst. Not only has one of the families of this Church been bereft of a beloved father, but we also, as a congregation, are bereft of a member and a ruling elder, who has accomplished for Christ a work which comparatively few have either the disposition or the ability to do.

JOHN C. FARR was born in this city November 13, 1799. We can scarcely realize how far back this carries us—almost a century. Here he spent the whole of his long life. For years he was one of Philadelphia's leading merchants. Did time permit, it would be both interesting and profitable to speak, upon this occasion, of his business career.

For he was a representative man of the best type. For industry, integrity and faithfulness he was distinguished among his fellows. And he looked not only upon his own things, but also upon the things of others. More than one can refer his business success largely to the wise counsel and kindly help of Mr. Farr. He did not devote his whole life to the acquisition of wealth, but discerned what should be a competency for a Christian man. He retired in time to devote years in using his means for the good of others, and for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

Mr. Farr was a man of remarkable natural endowments. One could not be intimately acquainted with him without discovering this. His natural ability would have distinguished him in any of the learned professions. His mind was eminently judicial. Often has this been manifest to me in our conferences upon the important interests of the Church. He did not enjoy

the advantages of academic training, but few men appreciated and prized the fruits of education more than he; and, indeed, he was an educated man. He possessed that education which distinguishes those who are self-made—which is obtained by accurate observation and vigorous thinking—and he was a well-informed man, for he was a constant reader.

But what is most interesting to us is Mr. Farr's religious character. He was trained in the school of Christ. His natural gifts were developed under the guidance of the word and spirit of God. He was a man of remarkable self-control. He had the grace of temperance in the true, broad, Scriptural sense. He was temperate in all things. In his thinking, in the exercise of his emotions, in his speech, and in all that he did, he was an example of temperance. He came to the consideration of questions with remarkable self-renunciation. He had both

the patience and the fairness to take in all the facts, and the discrimination to discern where distinctions should be made, and so his judgments were always along the line of principle, and his final conclusions correct. One of his favorite maxims was: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it: it is folly and shame to him." Nor did he omit prayer in dealing with any of the questions which he was called upon to decide. To him, Divine guidance was an essential element of life. He was a truly humble man. Never have I seen a more beautiful illustration of the words of Jesus, when he said, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," than was given in this life. By his humility he was exalted in many hearts, and exerted a silent influence, which was deeply and constantly felt. When bidding him good-bye, three weeks ago, an illustration of his genuine humility was given. I felt that I might not see him again, and

tried to thank him for his great personal kindness to me. This I did, knowing his aversion to hear anything which he had done mentioned. He looked at me, with an expression which was the language of sincerity, and said: "All the good that I have been enabled to do has been by the grace of God." He never sought to be prominent in any work; he preferred to do his part quietly, and to be out of sight. He possessed the grace of Christian love. He lived the very spirit of this love as the Apostle has described it in these words: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." He could always distinguish between a man and his evil deed.

The evil he condemned. For the sinner he had compassion. Nor did he ever desire to take judgment into his own hands ; and so his manner was always kind and gentle, and yet he was a man of genuine courage. There was in his mild way no sign of weakness. He would never have turned his face from the enemy in day of battle. In him could have been found that of which martyrs are made. But he understood that a Christian's weapons of warfare are, not carnal, but spiritual. The harmonious blending of these graces—temperance, humility, Christian love, moral courage—in the character of this beloved man, seemed an answer to the prayer of Moses: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

This character was developed through many years of genuine Christian discipleship, and in the active service of the Church ; for he was "planted in the house of the Lord." There is evidence that Mr. Farr was born

again in the morning of his life. The early death of his father, and the sterling, sweet piety of his mother, deeply impressed him. His delay in making a public profession of faith was not due to a want of personal interest in religion. It was, to him, a source of regret that he had waited so long to openly confess the Lord Jesus. He took this step under the pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Ely, in the year 1831; and, in 1834, he was chosen and ordained a ruling elder. So that for more than a half century he has been a communing member and a ruling elder in this Church. He was well grounded in the faith of the Gospel. To him the Scriptures were of absolute authority in all matters of religion. He enjoyed his own deep experience of the truth as it is in Jesus. But he understood the perils of attempting to measure the truth by his experience. The perfect work of Christ for man was the corner-stone of his faith. To him Jesus was the beginning

and the end. But he obeyed the exhortation of the Apostle : " Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." He possessed a true scriptural view of the nature of the Church. The headship of Christ and the vital union of all believers through the Holy Ghost were, to him, living truths. He heartily disapproved of all that tended to secularize the Church. This was to him God's house. And all true and faithful ministers of the Gospel were God's men. The ordinances of the Church were sacred, because they were Divinely appointed. He had a tender care for every member of the Church. And he always made me feel that I was his pastor. I shall never forget what he has done for me in confirming my views of the Gospel ministry. When at times I have realized that " we have this treasure in earthen vessels," and cried " Who is sufficient for these things?" I have found in him a comfort and a help indeed—I shall

miss you, my brother ! Mr. Farr was thoroughly catholic in spirit. He could say, with all his heart : " I believe in the holy catholic church and in the communion of saints." But he was at the same time a Presbyterian. He thoroughly understood and heartily approved of our form of Church government.

As a ruling elder he was eminently efficient. The years he devoted to the Sabbath-school, as teacher and superintendent, was a time of faithful and abundant sowing. Who can estimate the harvest ? Will he not have many golden sheaves to lay at the Master's feet ? For years Mr. Farr was an active and valued member of our Board of Relief. He helped to form this Board, and was one of its early treasurers. This cause was dear to his heart, and he anticipated the spirit it has recently awakened in our Church. No one entered more heartily than he into the recent centenary offering for

its endowment. But Mr. Farr's work was not confined to his own Church. He was a true Christian philanthropist. He sympathized with every good cause. He was connected with a number of Philadelphia's benevolent institutions. For ten successive years he was elected by City Council a director of Wills' Hospital. He was one of the originators, and for a time president, of the Union Temporary Home for Children. He was a willing and constant contributor for the support of other similar institutions. For twelve years he was a visiting member of the Philadelphia Prison Society. In his work for the prisoner he showed the deepest sympathy for fallen humanity, and at the same time his faith in the healing power of the Gospel. To many a ruined soul, separated from every gracious influence, he bore the sweet message of the love of Jesus. In many a gloomy cell he knelt in prayer to plead for the helpless.

Mr. Farr retained his faculties, in remarkable vigor, up to the end of his life. He never lost his interest in the questions of the day. He rejoiced in the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom, following all missionaries of the Cross with his sympathy, his prayers, and his offerings. He watched every interest of this Church in the spirit of the most loving care; up to the very last he devised liberal things for our prosperity. Until his body utterly failed in strength, *he was always found in his own place in his own Church.* I have thought that few could sing, with such deep sincerity as he, these beautiful stanzas:

"I love thy Church, O God!

Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eyes
And graven on thy hand.

"For her my tears shall fall;

For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end."

These last words were literally fulfilled in his life. His toils and cares did end upon that day which to him was of all the best. Calmly and peacefully, with the voice of the loved ones, left behind, echoing in his ears, he fell asleep in Jesus; and upon the shining shore, beyond the river, his eyes opened to see the beloved.

What can I add to the simple presentation of the Christian character and life's work of this beloved father to comfort those who mourn? Is not this sufficient, dear friends, to point you to the only source of peace and comfort? Have you chosen the Saviour whom he loved and followed so faithfully, as your Saviour? Are you not now most lovingly invited to follow him, even as he followed Christ?

And, beloved members of this Church, upon whom shall his mantle fall? O, is there not in this example of the abounding grace of God inspiration for us?

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01043 6576